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ABSTRACT

Parents have a significant role in preparing their children to read; they can help shape and strengthen the school's reading program. Articles included in this Right to Read Bulletin deal with the following topics: the heightened interest among educators in parent involvement in reading instruction; sharing tasks between parents and teachers in directed activities; parents showing children that they are concerned with what goes on at school; involving urban parents in reading programs; and trying to substantiate the catch-phrase, "parents as partners." An illustrated and annotated bibliography of resources that parents may order is included. (DF)

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ED157018

REPORTING ON READING

JUNE 1978
VOL.4, NO.4

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THIS ISSUE:
PARENTS AS MODELS FOR READING

BRIEFLY...

The sentence, "Parents are a child's first and most significant teachers" has become rather shopworn in the last few years. Still, the idea behind the words is as fresh as ever. Parents do have a significant part to play in preparing their children to read.

This issue of Reporting on Reading looks at the question of how parents can prepare their children for reading, and at how parents can help shape and strengthen a school's reading program.

INTEREST IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT HEIGHTENS

Historically, parent involvement in education is nothing new, as the textbooks remind us. One can point to New England town meetings where citizens handled school matters and to the frontier where townspeople hired and housed the teacher who taught in the one-room school house. But for much of modern times such intense participation, especially in instructional matters, has been rare. Until today that is. Now there is again a growing interest in involving parents more deeply with what goes on in the schools — and that includes reading instruction.

Through regulations that require parent participation on advisory councils and boards, federal programs like Title I and Right to Read have helped create the stronger home-school involvement abroad today. But the shape of that involvement varies. "You will find parents making recommendations, visiting the schools, working in the classroom on a one-to-one basis, or making materials," said Velma James, education program specialist with Title I's parent involvement component. At home, Mrs.

(continued to page 5)

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GUEST FEATURE: TAKING LEARNING HOME

Patricia S. Koppman

Reporting on Reading is pleased to feature Patricia S. Koppman as guest contributor to this issue on parents as models for reading. In her article and the interview that follows it, Ms. Koppman presents many practical ideas for helping parents acquire the kinds of skills they will find useful in reinforcing instruction.

Patricia S. Koppman is chairperson of the Parents and Reading Committee of the International Reading Association. She has had extensive experience as a classroom teacher, a curriculum writer, and a reading specialist. Presently, Ms. Koppman is a resource teacher in the San Diego (California) Unified School District. Most recently, she presented the overview presentation at the institute, "Reaching Parents When It Counts — Birth Through Primary," held prior to the 1978 Convention of the International Reading Association.

Since teachers are professional educators trained and paid to teach and since reading materials are so plentiful today, one is tempted to ask why parents should be involved in the educational process. The reason, of course, is that, as research has shown time and again, parents are the primary models for their children's behavior. Therefore, if parents are involved and concerned with educational matters, so their children will be. Many believe, in fact, that parent involvement is crucial to fostering willingness to read and guaranteeing success in the undertaking.

(continued to page 2)

TAKING LEARNING HOME

(continued from page 1)

Responsibilities of the Schools

The problem then becomes one of finding ways to involve parents with their children's learning, without asking them to assume the role of teaching reading skills. This last is, and should continue to be, the province of teachers who have had extensive training in reading skills, teaching strategies, and group dynamics.

However, if it be true that parents heavily influence the educational development of their children, then our educational institutions bear a responsibility for helping parents to become the best possible models for their children. Based on my experience in working with parents throughout the country, there are various things that schools can do to bring about greater parent involvement.

First of all, a special room, storage area, or office in the school should be designated for parents' exclusive use. Having some special area of their own helps parents realize they are considered a part of their school; they are not merely visitors or outsiders. A coffee pot, some plants, a bulletin board, and comfortable furniture can help create that welcome and warm feeling. Next, parents involved in the school should have a "briefcase" containing necessary tools for working with students: a pencil, pad of paper, felt pen, eraser, and whatever else the teachers feel parents may need in the classroom.

Skills Learned at School Can Help at Home

Once parents have a place in which to work and relax, materials needed, and some preliminary training, they are ready to begin helping students. As parents work with children in the classroom they will learn how to help their own children at home. The following model can be used to involve parents in the classroom in a meaningful way.

Parents in the program may:

1. Read to a student.

Teacher task: Makes available five exciting books that lend themselves to reading aloud.

Training needed: Suggest to the parents that they sit close to the child, allow the child to look at the illustrations and to read enthusiastically. After completing a book, extensive questioning is not necessary. Parents can simply ask, "Did you like the story?", "Tell me about the story."

Rationale: Continued research tells us that students who are read to at home are more often better readers. However, since many children are not read to at home, parents who read to them at school may be just what is needed. Parents, too, will learn what a pleasant experience reading is, will learn titles of good books, and how much children enjoy being read to. If all goes well, parents will then begin to read to their children at home.

2. Listen to a student read.

Teacher task: Asks students wishing to read aloud to place their readers on their desks. This clues the parent to go to the child and say, "I'll listen to you read."

Training needed: Parents need guidelines for listening to students read. When children come to words they don't know, parents should pronounce the word for them and write the word on a pad of paper.

When children have finished reading, suggest that parents show the children the words they missed, ask them to find the sentence where the word appeared and to reread the sentence. Most students will be successful. If not, the parent may then read the entire sentence to the child. The list of troublesome words can be given to the child, to the teacher, or put on vocabulary cards for later practice.

Rationale: Children enjoy reading aloud, especially when they have a skilled, understanding listener. However, listening to children read aloud requires skill. The listening skills parents acquire at school can be profitably used at home.

3. Assist students.

Teacher task: None required.

Training needed: Parents should be given guidelines for helping students. When a student is having difficulty or has made an error, encourage parents to say: "Tell me what you were to do," or "Read the directions to me." Having students verbalize or read directions will often clarify the difficulty the student is experiencing. Parents may help the student complete one item and then encourage the student to do the next item on his or her own. Praise the student for his or her accomplishments.

Rationale: According to the learning theory of immediate reinforcement, children should know the correct answer as soon after an error is made as possible. Students do not learn from red X marks on a paper that is graded days or even hours after the error has been made. Students learn from immediate teaching or reinforcement. Parents should be trained to assist students in arriving at the correct answer. Then together, parent and student can do one example. The parent should encourage the student to complete the next example on his or her own.

There are many other activities parents can carry out in the classroom to help students. They may play games, assist at learning centers, guide activities, such as sewing, cooking, art. However, the more relevant the school program is to what the parent can do at home, the greater the carryover will be to the home, and consequently the more a parent's own child will share in the benefits.

(continued to page 8)

Reporting on Reading is a publication of the Right to Read Effort and is designed to present information on innovative and developmental reading projects and activities throughout the country. It is meant to assist parents, administrators, teachers, aides, and volunteers who work with preschool, elementary, secondary, and adult populations.

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Inquiries or requests for additional information may be directed to Paul Owoc, Editor, **Reporting on Reading**, CEMREL, Inc., 3120 59th Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63139.

ON READING

Parents can be involved in making reading games and activities that can be used at school or in the home. (Courtesy of Vigo County School Corporation, Terre Haute, Indiana)

"BECAUSE I DON'T COME TO SCHOOL DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T CARE"

"We know that parents aren't *disinterested* in their children," reads a flyer distributed by Project TOUCH (Teachers and Others United for Children), an NEA-sponsored program to build parental support in the schools. If they are interested, why then don't more parents come to school? TOUCH believes "parents are caught up in the struggle to make a living, to provide for their families. Some are busy with other things. Some are simply timid. They don't know how to reach out to their schools. So the schools and teachers have to reach out to them."

In reading programs throughout the country, schools and teachers are demonstrating that they can reach out to parents who don't come to school. What it takes is careful planning and oftentimes a creative idea or two.

Taking Things Home

"Some of our students were complaining they weren't reaping the benefits of parent workshops held during the day because their parents were working and couldn't attend," said Lillian Lerner, district reading coordinator of Community School District #10, Bronx, New York. For those parents who couldn't get to school a "Take-Home Bag" was put together. The Take-Home Bag is a tote bag filled with reading games and activities that parents can do at home with their children. When one bag is "finished," it can be returned and exchanged for another.

Project HELP (Home Education Learning Project) in Benton Harbor, Michigan, is another program that has developed a set of home learning activities for use by parents with their children. Gladys Peeples Burks, who along with Dorothy Rich of the Home-School Institute developed the project, calls attention to several factors that programs thinking of using take-home activities should consider: "Don't start by sending a lot of things home that you've lifted from some book somewhere. Begin instead by getting together with parents and teachers to design a set of home learning activities that they think will work in their community. Then, too, keep the activities short — we have found writing activities

(continued to page 8)

READING PROGRAMS INVOLVE URBAN PARENTS

"Just stop and think — schools don't exist to give us jobs," Jimmie Marie Thomas of the Kansas City (Missouri) School District told an audience of reading teachers. "They exist for the children, and the children belong to the parents. And remember, we work for the parents. So it seems to me that what we need is a partnership between the classroom and the home. If we join together, we'll have a far better team than we ever would have had by trying to go it alone."

How to achieve that kind of partnership is an important question — especially for school people working in large urban communities. Two reading programs — one in Chicago, Illinois, and the other in Dallas, Texas, have given considerable attention to establishing a home-school partnership. Both programs offer ideas that may be useful to schools in other urban settings.

Operation Higher Achievement

"Operation Higher Achievement" is the name of a reading improvement program developed at Ulysses S. Grant Elementary School on the West Side of Chicago. Its aim is to stimulate pride in achievement — especially in reading. Intensive parent involvement distinguishes this program from others having similar aims.

The program had an unusual beginning. It was developed by a group of Grant School parents, teachers, and administrators at a weekend retreat. "Outsiders weren't invited," Kay Jones, coordinator of the program, explained. "If the program were to work, we felt it had to be 'ours.' We needed time to share ideas, to break down barriers of mistrust, set goals, and to fashion a plan for the future."

At that weekend retreat, no one was identified by position. Teachers and parents shared rooms with one another and astrological signs decided how participants would be grouped.

Two things happened. One was that parents and teachers had a chance to talk about what they liked and disliked about one another's behavior. Parents, for example, said they could do with fewer "slick-talking teachers" and with more teachers who took time to call after school hours. Teachers, on the other hand, said they had trouble working with parents who adopted the attitude of "I am uneducated, therefore, I am unable to help teach a child" as an excuse for doing nothing. "Some of those sessions were a little rough," Ms. Jones admitted, "but all of us needed to say some things out loud if we were ever to build a home-school program based on trust."

Important as it is for parents and school to feel at ease with one another, that feeling of comfort may lead nowhere unless it is accompanied by a plan of action and a method of organizing. At the retreat, program objectives were developed, and a separate parent-teacher committee was set up to act on each objective. During the year those committees helped organize reading pep rallies, clean-up parades, and a reading festival. They also published a poetry book of children's work and helped develop a parent-school contract.

(continued to page 5)

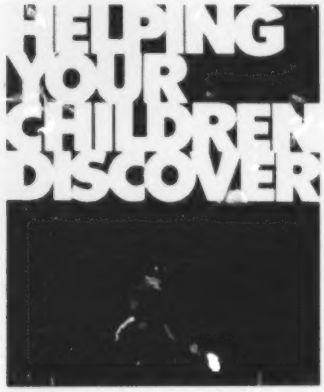
THESE ARE FOR PARENTS (AND TEACHERS, TOO)

"It's not that parents are apathetic or don't want to help their children to become skillful readers. They do want to help," one school administrator said. "But lots of times they're just not sure what they can do or how they can go about doing it. They need more information."

Information — in abundance — is what each of these pamphlets and booklets provides. Each is intended to be used by parents in the home. Each is short, cleverly designed, and clearly written. All are inexpensive.

"There are many activities which are related to reading, and can be used to stimulate interest. One very important device is to have your child write stories or tell stories to you while you write them down. A child will be encouraged to see his or her own words in print and this will communicate the concept of reading and writing."

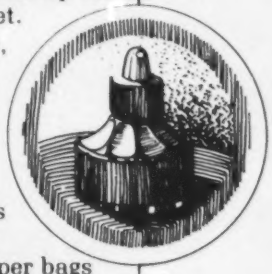
Copies available from International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19711; No charge for a single copy. $3.00 for 100 copies (prepaid only).



Talk about what children see, hear, and feel. Ask questions that demand more than a yes or no answer. Your conversation will cause them to observe, draw conclusions — in short, to think."

Copies available from New Hampshire Right to Read, Department of Education, Division of Instruction, 64 North Main Street, Concord, New Hampshire 03301; $.50 (as long as copies last).

"Children need practice using their hands. Ask them to button and zip the clothes in the laundry basket. Ask them to pick up objects, large and small buttons, beans, and rice. Ask them to practice opening and closing a jar. Ask them to build something using different size cans or blocks made of milk cartons. Give them old newspapers or paper bags to scribble on. Scribbling is the beginning of writing."



Copies available in either Spanish ("Recetas Para Leer") or English ("Recipes for Reading") from the National Urban Coalition, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; $1.65 per copy. $1.25 if 100 or more copies are ordered (postpaid).

"I check my child's comprehension of the story by asking questions following his or her reading. Several types of questions such as the following might be asked:

How did you like the story?

What do you think happened after the story ended?

Would you have liked to be one of the characters in the story? Why?"

Copies available from Publications, 206 Whitten Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65201; $.50; order no. UED 47.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

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"Car Wash: With a pencil, draw a car on a piece of paper and print small letters all over it. Ask your child to find a *p* on the car. The child finds the *p* on the car, says it, and then gets to erase it. Do this until all the letters are erased. In other words, the car has been 'washed clean.' " *Copies available from Dallas Independent School District, 3700 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75204; $10.41 (includes booklet and all related materials).*

INTEREST IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT HEIGHTENS

(*continued from page 1*)

James noted, parents can also play a "vital role" by reinforcing such basic readiness skills as hand-eye coordination and object manipulation.

Parents Speak Out

The parents of Title I also believe their work is vital. In fact, many of them are members of a new organization, The National Coalition of ESEA Title I Parents, aimed at strengthening parents' voice in the federal program.

Thomas Heatley, coordinator of the Coalition, sees parent advisory councils becoming "even more active" in the future — more involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs, and playing "a pivotal role" in special projects like the Summer Bridge Program, which will instruct parents in how to reinforce their children's reading skills in the summer.

Like the parents in Title I, those of the Right to Read Effort play a variety of roles in the reading programs, from tutoring children in recognizing shapes and sounds to helping select textbooks. But a change has occurred. "It's not so much telling parents today what they can do, as helping them understand children and know what educational techniques can go on at home," Barbara Little, education program specialist for Right to Read, explained. There is, in other words an effort being made to encourage parents as educators, informing them through workshops on how their children develop and what to expect when.

The PTA To Increase Efforts

Apart from the federal programs, perhaps the broadest efforts to involve parents in reinforcing reading skills has been made by the National PTA. Its project RISE (Reading Improvement Services Everywhere), developed in response to Right to Read, urges every PTA to develop activities along suggested national guidelines. Some PTAs have gone ahead and mounted very successful projects in storytelling or provided extra tutorial services in their districts. Still the PTA wants to step up its efforts. "We've slacked off in the past two years," Jerry Bird, chairman of the PTA's Commission on Individual Development, says. "We're going to do more." Tentative plans include producing a slide-tape to help parents identify reading problems a child may have, Charles C. Bomont, consultant to the commission, said. In his view, parents must become "more intelligent consumers" of education. "They (parents) must become knowledgeable about what to demand and what to expect of their children's schooling."

Where to Go For Help

Parents interested in becoming more active in the schools and administrators who want to know how parents can become involved, can call on organizations like the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE) for aid. Through its newsletters, training sessions, and a direct toll-free phone line to its office, NCCE assists parents in developing techniques for involving themselves in decisions related to such significant issues as budget, personnel, and material selection.

(*continued to page 6*)

READING PROGRAMS INVOLVE URBAN PARENTS

(*continued from page 3*)

The parent-school contract is an essential feature of the program, according to Ms. Jones. The contract lists specific things parents can strive to do each day: "Reading to and with my child," "Talking, listening, complimenting my child," and "Being selective in the choice of my child's TV programs." The contract is then signed by parent, child, teacher, principal, and the district superintendent.

"Of course, the signed contract is mainly symbolic," Ms. Jones said, "but still, it is a tangible pledge of cooperation from the home. And that's important because it means that responsibility for achievement is now being shared by parents, child, and school people."

Partners in Reading

"We are beginning to see a tremendous uplift of spirits here. The era of closed doors is over; the windows are open. Fingers point blame less frequently now as parents, community people, and school people begin to realize that we're all in this together and we all have an important part to play," said Alvin Granowsky, talking about Partners in Reading, a program he is directing in the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District.

Participants in the partnership are parents, school people, and members of the community. The point of contact is a carefully planned teacher-parent conference. "I know a parent-teacher conference sounds pretty old hat," Dr. Granowsky said, "but let me tell you, during parent-teacher conferences week in Dallas, a district with about 70,000 children enrolled in elementary school, 70% of the parents came to the schools or somehow met with teachers."

The conference itself is focused and specific. A "progress form" of essential basic reading skills is used to let parents know exactly which skills a child has mastered and which skills require more attention. Parents are also given a book of activities to help their children practice needed reading skills at home.

Why does the program work? "Partly because parents can see exactly what we're doing and what they can be doing," Dr. Granowsky says. "By doing that, of course, we're making ourselves accountable. But then, so are the parents. But because they are being informed and are invited to help, we see parents who are willing to assume much more responsibility for their child's progress in reading."

What about the parent who never comes to a conference? For the children of those parents, Partners in Reading, with a grant from the Junior League of Dallas, Inc., has established a child advocate program: A volunteer agrees to serve as advocate for a child, by attending the parent-teacher conference, by receiving the progress forms, and by helping the child whenever possible. "We set this program up because we believe every child has a right to have an advocate," Dr. Granowsky says. "We would prefer that advocate to be the parent, but if that's impossible, the right of the child to learn must be safeguarded." □

PARENTS AS PARTNERS: CATCH PHRASE OR COMMITMENT?

What does it take to sustain a reading program in which parents play a significant and continuing role? What would you tell someone asking how to organize a reading program with a strong parent participation component? Here's what was said when these questions were posed to administrators with programs characterized by active parent participation.

Take the Money and Run?

To start with, many administrators advised schools to examine their motives for involving parents. While participation can be encouraged out of various motives, one motive in particular, they warned, can ultimately damage home-school relationships. Jimmie Marie Thomas of Kansas City, Missouri, explained: "Because funding is related to parent involvement in many cases, some school districts have shrewdly observed, 'If we want to get the cash, we've got to get the parents.' So they call a meeting or two and have parents to 'sign-off' on the program. That's a short-sighted view, however, because the law also requires that information about the program be disseminated. So it doesn't take long for parents to get wise, and pretty soon, instead of partners, you've got adversaries."

Some Depth, Some Meat, Some Meaning

Parents may choose not to participate in a reading program if they feel too many areas in it remain the exclusive domain of school people. To get active, substantial participation, parents need to know they can be involved wherever their interests lead them. One such program that elicits active support is the Flint (Michigan) Follow Through Project.* As Nina Jones, resource center coordinator for the project pointed out, "We call our project a parent-implemented program because no aspect of it is off-limits to parents. Parents participated in selecting the program, they interviewed people for the job of project director, they assisted with proposal writing, and they continually monitor what is happening in the program. In other words, if you want to get parents involved, you've got to share significant decision-making with them. What they do has to have some depth, some meat, some meaning."

Seek a Commitment

In some reading programs, parents participate by helping their children at home. For such a program to work effectively, many administrators recommend seeking a written commitment from parents. "What we ask parents to do is to sign a pledge to read to their child every day," Betty Moore, director of the De Kalb County Reading Center in Clarkston, Georgia, said. "Now, of course, we know and the parents know that that pledge doesn't bind anyone to anything, but just by signing they've given their word to help, and that counts for a whole lot." □

TALKING IT OVER

"Talking It Over" is a new feature of *Reporting on Reading* this year. It is a readers' column. Your comments, suggestions, corrections, and reproofs are welcome. But more is intended.

You are invited to submit questions or to pose problems that you find especially complicated or puzzling. The questions may be related to the topic of the issue or to anything else related to reading instruction. Hopefully, someone, somewhere will have some ideas for you. The letters received will appear in the next issue.

Address your comments, questions, answers, or ideas to: *Reporting on Reading*, CEMREL, Inc., 3120 59th Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63139.

Impressed

I received your February issue, Vol. 4, No. 2 and was quite impressed with your articles. Being a Reading Specialist myself, I can certainly understand the many challenges and frustrations connected with this area of concern.

— Sister Laurette Gendron, CSJ, Orange, California

Depressed

It is little wonder that those who are not directly involved with education are sniping at education in America. Publications like yours make educators an easy target. I refer to, specifically, volume 4, number 2. As an example: I take exception to the language and information contained in the article "The Reading Specialist: A Team Leader." Does Mr. Ruddell have no more to apprise us of than "preplanning is necessary to implement change" (how come planning isn't good enough?) or "as a reading teacher . . . charged with implementing change . . . (you) become the change agent."? He does, however, provide us with some great terminology to use when considering the status of our colleagues: Highly supportive/highly productive to Anti-supportive/non-productive. I could go on to cite other pages in the issue of the same high quality nonsense. In short, I accuse your publication — assuming this to be a representative sample — of being so much flattus. Surely you can do better.

— William T. Haggett, Reading Teacher, Star Lake, New York

INTEREST IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT HEIGHTENS

(*continued from page 5*)

What about instruction? "How education is delivered is basically the province of the professional," says Carl Marburger, senior associate of NCCE. "The assumption is the professionals know best. And they *do* know best how to teach. I'm just not so sure they always know what parents are concerned about."

Bettering the communication between parents and schools and hopefully bettering the student's education is what parent involvement is all about. "I'm convinced we cannot solve the literacy problem without the help of parents," says Gilbert B. Schiffman, director of the National Right to Read Effort. Others agree and add that a host of afflictions in education, such as alienation, truancy, and violence in the schools might be relieved by the more intense involvement of parents in the system. If that judgment be correct, it may be that everyone stands to gain a great deal from the current efforts to heighten parent involvement. □

RESOURCES

Who's Doing What?

Take parent involvement in reading, broaden the terms, and you get citizen participation in education. There are a number of national organizations concerned with how school people and citizens can work together for everyone's benefit, but until *Resources for Upgrading Skills Through Citizen Involvement* was available, it was difficult to find out who was concerned with what. Resources lists nine national organizations interested in fostering increased citizen involvement in education. For each organization, a statement of purpose is given, a list of major publications is provided, and the name and telephone number of a contact person is supplied.

Available free of charge from the Resources and Referral Service, The Center for Vocational Education, Ohio State University, 160 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

A "Who Done It"

David J. Yarington has written a book about why many children are not learning to read. In the preface to *The Great American Reading Machine*, he says his book is for all those parents and teachers "who know that the job [of teaching reading] is not being done well, but who don't know why not and who are puzzled about why the 'all-out national commitment to reading improvement' has for a decade brought lots of promises but few successes." The culprit, according to Yarington, is the "reading machine" — an interlocking group of people, organizations, and agencies, each guarding some particular turf. For parents, Yarington presents a checklist of questions to use in examining the way reading is being taught in their children's schools.

Available from Hayden Book Company, Inc., 50 Essex Street, Rochelle Park, New Jersey 07662; $5.95.

The Missing Link

"We've noticed a glaring omission in the whole educational system," observed Daniel Safran of the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement. "In virtually no education school in the country are teachers being trained to work with parents — in any form." Seeing that gap, Ira J. Gordon and William F. Breivogel have edited a book called *Building Effective Home-School Relationships*. In it, they try to prepare teachers-in-training to handle a role that will involve establishing effective working relationships with parents and paraprofessionals. Their suggestions, based on nearly a decade of practical experience, may also interest teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, administrators, and project evaluators.

Copies available from Allyn and Bacon, Inc., College Division, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02210; $12.95.

Needed — A Taxonomy of Involvement

Parent involvement can mean anything from a father asking his daughter to name the letters she sees in a newspaper headline to a citizen group seeking a greater voice in the governance of a school reading program. In their article, *Parent Involvement in the Schools: Towards What End?*, James Filipczak, Ann Lordeman, and Robert M. Friedman argue that if research is to shed more light on the effects of parent involvement in the schools, the kind of parent participation advocated and the subsequent benefits of that participation need to be clearly stated. The article provides a summary of recent research dealing with parent involvement in the schools.

Copies available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210; $1.97; order no. ED 143 104.

The materials described have been selected from recent publishers' lists, publications of professional organizations, and state and federal sources. The listing is not intended to be comprehensive. No endorsement by the Office of Education nor by CEMREL, Inc., is implied or can be assumed.

TAKING LEARNING HOME

(continued from page 2)

Q: *Parent involvement in reading now seems largely limited to parents of preschool and elementary school students. Do you foresee greater participation by parents of junior- and senior-high students?*

Patricia Koppman: Yes, I do. As parents of older students become concerned about their children's progress in school, they realize that they, the parents, have to assume some responsibility in the educational process. However, we as school people also have a responsibility to parents. If we want parents to become involved, we need to provide them with guidelines and suggestions for encouraging their children's learning. Then I believe parents will help. Now, there are a few things that parents of older students can do. Controlling the TV, sharing experiences, encouraging reading, setting aside places for studying, giving and providing books for their children, and reading to their youngsters — even though they are 15 or 16 years old — are some of them. Parents need to know it's not too late to make a start.

Q: *In your article you stress that teaching reading is the province of teachers — not of parents. Why can't parents teach reading?*

Koppman: In our schools today, reading is taught by many different methods and in many different ways. Therefore, it may be very difficult for individual parents to know enough about their district's method, procedure, or program to teach reading effectively to their children. To my mind, teaching reading needs to be left to the teacher so that problems and confusion don't occur. If the teaching of reading is truly a skill — and I believe if it weren't, we wouldn't have teachers being trained to do it — then it has to be left to the reading teacher. But let me also add that it is the teacher's and the school's responsibility to tell parents what process, what program, what methods are being used and to give them guidelines for assisting with and reinforcing that method.□

Issues to Come:

August — **Reading and Measurement**

September — **Administrators Emphasize and Support Reading Programs**

BECAUSE I DON'T COME TO SCHOOL

(continued from page 3)

recipe-style on a single piece of paper works well — and centered around ordinary things found in the home — kitchen utensils or living room furniture do just fine." Finally, Mrs. Burks stresses the importance of using home learning activities frequently and regularly. "Every Wednesday we send the activities home. Unless things are done systematically, we don't think the kind of cooperation and interest we see happening would ever get a chance to build."

Going To Parents

"We've tried to get parents into the schools, but, frankly, it's been difficult," James Huckleberry, director of the Follow Through Program in Daviess County (Kentucky), said. "So, we decided to go to them — to meet them on their home ground."

Regular visits with parents have become an important feature of many instructional programs. Trained paraprofessionals — many of whom are parents themselves — work with parents on activities that can be used at home.

Are parents reluctant to open their doors to someone from the school? "It depends on how you handle it," Virgie Binford of Richmond, Virginia,* explained. "Nobody's going to welcome you if they think you're there to pry into their business or to tell them what to do. But if, right from the beginning the emphasis is on helping, then you'd be surprised what can be done. Also, before you try a home program, remember that the paraprofessional's day has to be adjusted to fit the parents' schedule. It can't be a banking-hours operation and still be effective."□

**This project has been recognized as "exemplary" by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) established by the Education Division of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The JDRP meets periodically to review the evidence of effectiveness submitted for a wide variety of educational products and practices developed through federally supported programs.*

Further information about this project or about other exemplary projects is available from the state facilitator(s) in your state. For a complete list of state facilitators, write: ED Materials/Support Center, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research & Development, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103.